

**CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
February 27, 2013 MINUTES**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on February 27th, 2013,
at 6:00 p.m. in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rory Gilbert, Chair
Denise Heap- Vice Chair
Hong Chartrand
Lela Hinds-Peterson
Frank Johnson
Susan Lotz
Wayne Manske
Heather McAlister

MEMBERS ABSENT

Cliff Moon
Orchidia Peterson

STAFF PRESENT

Ruth Giese
Andrea Arenas

GUESTS

Charles Crismon
Lesa Crismon
Alex Deshuk
Robert Forrest
Julie Howard
Lisa Procknow
Ed Quedens
Arlene Schenck
Jodi Sorrell
Mickey Tait

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

- Jaime Aguirre's Resignation.

Ms. Gilbert advised the board of Mr. Aguirre's resignation and acknowledged his work on the board.

- Introduction of new board members Susan Lotz and Heather McAlister.

The board introduced themselves to Ms. Lotz and Ms. McAlister; in turn Ms. Lotz and Ms. McAlister introduced themselves to the board.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

Mr. Crismon stated that he sent a request to be placed on the agenda to Ms. Arenas, who replied that the information was forwarded to the chair of the board. Staff advised that the information was brought to Ms. Gilbert's attention. Mr. Crismon provided the board with a handout on his concern and made a formal request to be placed on the agenda. Ms. Gilbert acknowledged his request and advised that they will consider it for a future agenda item upon review of the literature. Ms. Gilbert also advised that Mr. Deshuk was present from the City Manager's Office and could speak to him regarding some of his concerns. Mr. Crismon accepted the opportunity to speak with a staff member, but further expressed his desire to present in front of the board. Ms. Hinds-Peterson stated for the record that the board supports and appreciates the time and exceptional work from their staff liaisons.

3. Approval of minutes from the January 23rd, 2013 board meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Hinds-Peterson to approve the January 23rd, 2013 minutes. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Mesa Police Department Report.

Mr. Villa, the Police Department representative, was regretfully unable to attend the board meeting therefore Ms. Giese presented on his behalf. Ms. Giese advised that the Mesa Police Department as well as the Human

Rights Board will be participating in the Phoenix Pride Parade on April 6th, 2013. She also informed that Mr. Villa received approval to form a Mesa Police Veterans Advisory Board which should be in place before May. Ms. Heap questioned if a list of advisory board meetings could be provided. Ms. Giese stated she will follow up with Mr. Villa.

5. Hear and discuss a presentation on the East Valley Dial-a-Ride transition update.

Ms. Sorrell introduced herself to the board. She advised that on July 1st, 2012 the delivery model for providing paratransit service through East Valley Dial-a-Ride went from a shared-ride van service to brokerage service using taxi cabs. Ms. Sorrell introduced Ms. Schenck from Valley Metro Paratransit Group to share an update on this change of this service. Ms. Schenck advised that a contractor, Total Transit, was selected to provide taxis for up to 50% of the trip, and will sub-contract out the remaining 50% to other transit providers and non-profits. Fairs remained the same, as well as customers that had subscription trips. Ms. Schenck continued to advise that they notified the public through community advanced public notification such as direct mailings to customers in the database and 34 community forums. She explained that there was a transitioning period where the taxi provider was trying to fit in Dial-a-Ride within their existing cash-taxi model, but that Valley Metro worked closely with them to work towards the Dial-a-Ride model. Ms. Schenck stated that the program has been very successful since, and that Valley Metro and customers have been satisfied with the services being provided.

Ms. Gilbert questioned the difference between the two models. Ms. Schenck explained that the traditional Dial-a-Ride model consists of cut away vehicles that allowed for multiple people, but was difficult for people with mobility devices. The traditional taxi model is cash based per trip from point A to point B, whereas the Dial-a-Ride may have multiple stops. The initial complications stemmed from the taxi providers being able to deliver on the amount of rides they committed to. Ms. Schenck confirmed that the problem no longer exist due to the efforts set forth by the provider to correct any misgivings. Ms. Heap stated that she has a friend who utilizes this service, and she does not have any complaints for this transition. Ms. Sorrell noted that since they have switched to this model, ridership has increased 12%, particularly for the demographic in mobility devices. The cost of a trip has also gone down 23% for the rider, as arraigned through the contract given that they are shorter direct trips. Ms. Schenck advised that they submitted a survey after six months of use, per the contract, and received an overwhelming amount of positive results regarding satisfaction with the condition of the vehicles, drivers, and call center. Ms. Gilbert thanked the presenters for their overview.

6. Hear and discuss a presentation on the proposed Valley Metro Title VI Fare and Service Equity Policies. Title VI is protections for low income and minority populations.

Ms. Sorrell introduced Robert Forrest and Lisa Procknow with Valley Metro Planning Department. Mr. Forrest reviewed the intention of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mr. Forrest stated that late last year the Federal Transit Administration issued guidance to all transit providers are to evaluate Title VI within their services. By doing such, Valley Metro has proposed major services changes and fare changes to accommodate these policies. They have actively engaged the public in policy review in order to solicit input, build a consensus, and gather suggestions on the proposed policy changes. Mr. Forrest is requesting the opinion of the board as well as any feedback based on the proposed changes.

Mr. Forrest provided background on how Valley Metro determines a major service change, which is comparable to other cities statewide and nationally. Ms. Hinds-Peterson questioned how the impact is determined on major service changes. Mr. Forrest stated that a survey known as the Origin Destination Study, similar to the census, is provided to affected riders. Ms. Hinds-Peterson questioned if the survey is being provided in other non-English languages to include minority and diverse cultures. In response, Mr. Forrest advised that the forms are provided in English and Spanish, to accommodate the majority of riders. Ms. Gilbert questioned what kind of

questions are on the survey. Mr. Forrest replied that they are questions directly related to the travels of the rider such as what is your origin and what is your destination, as well as the demographics of the rider. The board expressed their concerns that this process discount many of riders impacted given the lack of surveys to non-English and Spanish speakers and the overall lack of accurate results steamed from surveys. Mr. Forrest advised that this method is popularly used among large mass data needs and although it is not perfect, it is the best the option available. Ms. Sorrell also confirmed that the Origin Destination Study is an accurate and intensive study, and provides the rider with many resources and options in taking the survey. Ms. Hinds-Peterson questioned the ratio of surveys being completed. Ms. Sorrell stated that she did not have those facts, but the rate of return that the attempt to achieve is 15%. She further explained that while this figure appears minimal, each industry has their standards and this is comparable for the industry nationwide. The board members acknowledged the results, but further expressed their concerns that community needs are not being adequately represented.

Mr. Forrest expressed that he seeks input from the public and from the board on the change to their fare equity policy, which is proposed between 3% to 5%, and on the rate of the threshold impacted currently proposed at 25%. The fares will not be directly impacted based on any change, rather ensures that riders are being charged equitably based on the ridership demographics of the service they use. Mr. Forrest provided examples to the board to further educate them for their decision. Ms. Hinds-Peterson expressed concern for the direct impact on the rider for any fare increase. Ms. Sorrell explained that bus fares only cover 25% of the cost and the other 75% is provided by the cities that utilize the service. Since the cities are also working on limited budgets, it is foreseeable for some of the cost recovery to reflect back onto the rider. Ms. Sorrell stated that on March 1st, 2013 current rates will increase to \$2 per trip or \$4 for a day pass with unlimited access for the regular busses. For express buses, rates will increase to \$4 per trip, or many employers offer discounted passes such as the Platinum Pass for riders over 60 years of age.

In response to the question asked, Mr. Manske stated that a 4% threshold increase appears most reasonable to him, in that it has a lesser impact on the rider but still allows for minimal flexibility managing future fares. Ms. Hinds-Peterson stated that she too feels the higher percentage in best only for the fact that it allows for more manageable fares. She also added, in order to combat cost impact to impoverished riders, discount passes for low income should be made available such as Section 8 for low income housing. Ms. Lotz agreed with Mr. Manske, in that 4% appears to be the middle ground when assessing the situation. However, she did not feel comfortable enough making a decision on the threshold impact without further information. Ms. Gilbert agreed with her colleagues on the 4% fare equity, and felt that the threshold impact should be greatly lower than the proposed 25%. Ms. Heap stated that she feels the 3% fare equity change is best to decrease the effect on the low income community. Ms. Heap also agreed that 25% is too high of a threshold for impact and suggested it should be lowered to 20%. Ms. Chartrand commented that the fare equity should be 3% or lower. Mr. Johnson stated that he wishes to speak with family and friends in the community to gain more public opinion and will return his results at a later time.

7. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Veterans Task Force (VTF).

Ms. Gilbert guided the board to review the minutes from the January 26th, 2013 meeting to review the progress and outcome of the first collaboration with veterans and veteran group affiliates.

- Approve March 2nd, 2013 meeting agenda.

Ms. Gilbert advised of the board of the revised agenda. A motion was made by Ms. McAlister to approve the March 2nd, 2013 agenda Ms. Lotz seconded the motion. Ms. Heap made another recommendation for amendment to include, "Discuss the ongoing structure of VTF." as a line item. The board motion to approve the agenda and the amendments carried unanimously.

8. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team (IRA).

Ms. Heap advised the board members that IRA is currently researching an anti-hate crimes and an anti-discrimination ordinance for the City of Mesa. Ms. Heap also informed that North Pointe I HOA would like to hold a general discussion on hate crimes on May 20th, 2013. Lastly, Ms. Heap stated that work on the Cesar Chavez March and Diversity Champion Awards has been tabled for a later date. Ms. Giese advised that the cost analysis request to the Human Resources Department on domestic partner benefits has been submitted and acknowledged.

9. Discuss and approve participation in Phoenix Pride parade and festival to be held on April 6th, 2013.

Ms. Gilbert provided background on the board's participation in last year's pride parade. She advised that they have been invited to participate and march with the Mesa Police Department again. Mr. Johnson made the motion to participate in the parade and Mr. Manske seconded. Ms. Heap stated that they should march with the police department, but should also register as their own entity to show the board's support. Mr. Manske expressed his hesitation by entering as a separate organization, as it may be taking away their support towards the police department who is making a groundbreaking demonstration by marching. After a discussion, the board agreed that with enough participation they are willing to enter as their own entity. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

Ms. Gilbert advised of the Peace Pole Dedication that took place on February 25th, 2013 in front of the Mesa City Plaza. Ms. Gilbert thanked Councilmember Dennis Kavanaugh and Natalie Lewis with the City Manager's Office for their assistance and support for the project. She also thanked Mesa Sunrise Rotary for their contribution. Ms. Heap advised that she attended the quarterly Mesa Police Advisory Boards meeting and the General Plan Committee meeting. Ms. Heap stated the committee has agreed to include diversity in the General Plan based on her recommendation. Mr. Manske advised that he will be attending a Mean Girls conference and workshop. He also encouraged the board members to attend the free monthly documentary Cinema Series at the Mesa Arts Center, which the board is a sponsor of. Ms. Gilbert informed that she attended a Healing Racism event on profiling and privilege.

11. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

Ms. Heap stated that she would like to discuss the possibility of Mesa becoming a city of compassion. Ms. Gilbert reminded that Mr. Crimson's request would be reviewed and considered.

- Next meeting will be held on March 27th, 2013 at 6pm.

12. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:49pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator